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Letter from Anne Whitney, Belmont, Massachusetts, to Adeline Manning, 1861 February 10

Anne Whitney

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No. Dear - never, more - never
so much - perhaps -

You send for mine & I
will not let it go - & do
I know before? yes.

I am sorry if I seemed to you
disproach you in my remark
concerning your mother, as
if you, as well as I or any
other, did not see the good
& being gratefully acknowledge
it - as much as I can be -
Call the matter, I was but
thinking how apt we all were
to receive a constant benefit
thanklessly - & that one lonely
or heroic trait may be taking
the stones out of our path
daily for a life time.

without a single recognition
from us. we demand so
much!

Why - what will
you do? I think you are
wrong - what rational ground
do you want, to establish
right relations with another?
Did any separation school
of the free ever do that?
Is it not possible to create
a friendship by justice
mutual forbearance & above
all by mutual service. For
to receive without giving kills
the soul? - Only love comprehends
all gifts & love pays love
enough. If in any call of
life you have room for
us perhaps find an incidental

good meeting from the
separation - but to go for
that good, I fear you wd.
miss it - I yet cannot
say one word to prevent fr.
seeing you of the Cross wh.
you bear, or trying to do it -
one sometimes suffers nec-
essarily - but the noblest way
is the best for you & the most
natural too - wait - a little
at least till an opportunity
suggests.

With all your en-
tire efforts at right
judging there is one thing
wh. it is perhaps almost
impossible for you to ap-
preciate - & that is the
difficulty of fr mother's

position between an indulgent
Aunt & her natural &
cognate influence over her
her own sense of what
was right - her duty as a
mother. Place yourself there
& see what angelic metal
it would melt that look shd.
not of which we speak a battle.
With parents normally, one
of two things wd happen. The
sense of duty wd yield & the
parent would purchase
favor by indulgence - or that
sense wd stiffen into a rod
of iron. With your mother
neither of these could be & that
is much for gratitude. Certainly
so far as ~~the~~ ^{can} ~~be~~ there is no
weakness in her love for her
own children. She is firm
& noble. If the motherly feelings
natural to her lowered any
child thrown upon her care

I mean the motherly love -
gave way as I think very
likely it did ~~in~~ in this case,
judge her not too harshly
for that. I believe there
is now no one whom she cov-
ers better than you. - And
sorry not that frequent
want of tact & gentle almost
childlike complacent consid-
eration there is so much worthy
of love: genuine humility
& readiness for suffering,
with capacity for suffering
herself - then wh. I think
there can be no stronger
bond than another to us!
Has she failed of any one
of the qualities wh. go to make
of home peace & joy.
How much worse were the case
for you! Had she been less

Gentle, less liberal, less
just? Am I not's good
to this one characteristic
of non-muddling?

... I think, Abby
a responsibility rests with
you - in some respects you
are the elder - in sagacity,
in delicacy of perception -
her medium is love - born a very
pure & high it often is the
struggling through an imperfect
intellectual medium - but
when her love has failed or
not been equal to the trial -
she errs & lingers in vain &
agonizes over the sense of
failure to a degree you are
not aware of. It is for you
to take the right step. I do
not say that you should hurry
& love or love lovingly as you
say - but can you not do

Something to bring about a
simple relation of mutual
kindness without passion
fetter & pressed of more love
than naturally springs out
of such a relation? May it
not be - if you thought can-
fully wd. you not see that
you have borne freely some-
what rigidly during these
years as if you felt pledged
to maintain the cruel sen-
tence of "not love"? & if in the
countless little acts of remem-
brance & good will wh. it falls
to the weaker less opportunity
to do, love does not grow then
I shd say that Creation was
unravelling & our life was
backward -

I cannot add
can glad you spoke to me

I certainly did not desire it
but being one it seems best
so. I have the parcel confined
to you - with sincerely the strength
of will - I have no right to come
to you & mean to assume none
simply - you are dear to me
during the earlier part of
my acquaintance I felt re-
pelled by somewhat - I cannot
say what - or - I have foreseen
this letter of yours it will have
eased me of that might more
"somewhat" - but in spite of
that I have to love you & I
want to love you more & more
for when is the end of loving
I do not think that I mean
frigidly to say that in love
more & more is consequent
upon just doing - one sometimes
loses class: the most promising
inclines - but you are honest
you are noble - I cannot forgive
my ideal - you - but anywhere
I do not you feel - you cannot go from
me - so kiss me in the mouth - tell me

is it so - I forgive all that I have (mis)judged
amex - & love me still - & in dear love - I am
& send